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Message Text

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11
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-10

NSAE-00 PA-02 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-15 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 DLOS-04 DODE-00 NSC-05 /082 W
---------- 059720
P R 101630Z MAY 76
FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6288
INFO COMICEDEFOR
CINCLANT
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

UNCLAS REYKJAVIK 0649

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR IC
SUBJECT: FISHERIES DISPUTE: FORNMIN AGUSTSSON PUBLICLY DISCUSSES
NATO AND BASE

REF: REYKJAVIK 647 (DTG 101510Z MAY 76)

1. IN COURSE OF RADIO INTERVIEW MAY 9, FORNMIN EINAR AGUSTSSON REPEATED CRITICISM OF NATO AND USG WHICH PROGRESSIVE PARTY LEADER OLAFUR JOHANNESSON HAD LEVELED MAY 8 (REFTEL). AFTER DISCUSSION OF RECENT FISHERIES INCIDENTS, FOLLOWING EXCHANGES BETWEEN QUESTIONERS AND AGUSTSSON TOOK PLACE:

Q. IS THE NEXT STEP A DEFINITE THREAT TO WITHDRAW FROM NATO?

A. SUCH A THREAT HAS NOT BEEN CONSIDERED BY THE GOVERNMENT BUT THE NATO COUNTRIES SHOULD KNOW THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO CONTINUE COOPERATION WITH THEM WHEN ONE OF THEIR NUMBER BEHAVES IN THIS WAY. THEY SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT MANY ICELANDERS BELIEVE THERE IS
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NOW THE NEED FOR RECONSIDERATION OF OUR MEMBERSHIP. ALSO, THE

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UNITED STATES SHOULD KNOW THAT THE PRESENCE OF THE DEFENSE FORCE IS NO LONGER A MATTER OF COURSE. THAT ALSO NEEDS TO BE RECONSIDERED.

Q. ISN'T THE BRITISH BEHAVIOR EQUIVALENT TO A DIRECT ATTACK?

A. I HAVE COMPLAINED TO NATO BUT THEY CAN'T ORDER THE BRITISH OUT JUST AS THEY CAN'T ISSUE ORDERS TO US. HOWEVER, THEY SHOULD AT LEAST ANNOUNCE THEIR SUPPORT FOR US IN THIS DISPUTE.

Q. WILL YOU GO TO THE NATO FOREIGN MINISTER'S MEETING THIS MONTH?

A. I BELIEVE THAT WOULD BE BEST BUT I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO CHANGE MY MIND IF THE SITUATION WORSENS.

Q. CAN ICELAND GET RID OF THE BASE WITHOUT WITHDRAWING FROM NATO?

A. YES. THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT STARTED THE PROCESS OF TERMINATING THE BASE WITHOUT LEAVING NATO. I BELIEVE THAT ICELAND DOES NOT NEED THE DEFENSE FORCE.

Q. WERE YOU SURPRISED AT THE AMERICAN DECISION NOT TO SUPPLY ICELAND WITH PATROL CRAFT?

A. NO. HOWEVER, SECRETARY KISSINGER'S STATEMENT TO CROSLAND SHOWED THAT THE AMERICANS ARE TAKING THE SIDE OF THE BRITISH.
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